

HONORARY SECRETARY'S REPORT 2018

Following the 2018 AGM, there were two changes in the Officers of the Society. Keith Hiscock retired after eleven years as Chairman (his second stint in this post) and Alan Rowland was elected to the role. His promotion from Vice Chairman left a vacancy that was filled by Belinda Cox. Alan also took the opportunity to hand on the archivist role to André Coutanche and Belinda has agreed to look after the AGM auctions. Keith has now taken on the editing of the Annual Report. His contribution to the Society and its administration has been significant not least in his marine work and representing the Society's interests at the Lundy Management Forum and the Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group during his tenure.

The long awaited *Lundy Fungi* guide by John Hedger and David George was published in the autumn. It has been 15 years in the making and the resulting book has been well worth the wait, providing an accessible and informative field guide to Lundy's fungi. It was launched on Lundy in late September and a further launch will take place at the 2019 AGM. The sixth volume of the Journal was published to coincide with the AGM. The feedback about the quality and variety of the papers has been very positive, which is very encouraging, especially to our contributors and editors who put in the hard work to make it a valued publication.

The committee has been very productive over the year. Three meetings were held including one in September, hosted by our President, Diana Keast in Marlborough. Governance matters have occupied a good proportion of our time. The implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) resulted in an information audit of personal data held by the Society and a privacy policy was developed. We were fortunate that good practices were already in place so our response to the legislation has been light touch. Frances Stuart re-joined the committee and has brought with her expertise in safeguarding so we were able to adopt a safeguarding policy.

We have made good progress with setting up an endowment fund to invest our significant cash reserves in order to enable them to better serve our objectives. After considered discussions about risk and investing ethically to align with our objectives, an investment policy has been agreed and a fund manager identified. The fund itself is in the process of being established as I write. I must record my thanks to Tom Dickens for his advice in these areas and to our Treasurer, Roger Chapple, for ably steering the affordability discussions to a very satisfactory conclusion.

Other work by the committee included starting work on sorting the Trevor Miles archaeology archive which has been donated to the LFS, further discussions about succession planning, finding data storage for our growing electronic records of observations, and a membership survey. The survey had a tremendous response and we will be analysing the data during 2019. Thank you to everyone who responded!

Preliminary plans are being made to mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the LFS in 2021. A Discover Lundy week is planned and, in a break from tradition, the AGM will take place on Lundy for the first time. The Landmark Trust have agreed to produce a special stamp issue for the anniversary and I'm sure there will be further ideas for activities developed over the intervening period.

Several LFS members have been involved in the Lundy Ambassadors scheme which has provided volunteers to support the island such as guided walks, family activities and outreach talks on the mainland. The scheme has been funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the church restoration project and has so far provided 79 days of volunteer time.

Two working parties were sent to Lundy during 2018. The first of the year set off on 23 February, just as the well predicted 'Beast from the East' was taking hold. The leader was Trevor Dobie and a full party of fourteen members attended. During the whole stay, the weather was extremely cold with strong easterly winds, culminating in a huge fall of snow towards the latter part of the week – very unusual for Lundy.

Many worthwhile tasks were completed, including rhododendron seedling searches across the plateau near Pondsburry, tree transplanting above Quarter Wall Copse, sanding and oiling many of the island's bench seats, fencing off the entrance to the Terrace Heligoland Trap, and collecting logs and firewood for the island's properties as the coal supply had been used up. The return to the mainland was delayed due to Storm Emma with departure occurring three days late.

In October, thirteen members made it to Lundy despite a one-day delay due to stormy weather. Jan Paul was a popular leader overseeing projects which included extending a tree nursery in Millcombe Garden, tidying footpaths around Millcombe, retrieving logs from the lower East Sidelands left over from the rhododendron felling, cleaning inside the Old Light and sorting the recycling.

Both working parties had a good mixture of new members and experienced volunteers, and many of them re-booked for 2019 as soon as they arrived home! Regular volunteer Dave Preece retired after attending working parties for 25 years. Our thanks to Dave for his exceptional contribution to Lundy's conservation work.

In other work, the new LFS website was launched at the AGM providing a much improved resource for Lundy information. Autumn fungi forays were led by John Hedger and Mandy Dee. We continue to contribute to the Lundy Management Forum and the Lundy Marine Protected Area Advisory Group.

Following completion of the building work on the church, work started on the interpretation panels, covering subjects including Lundy's wildlife and history. Your Hon Sec and Siân Cann, Lundy's Education Officer, put many hours of work into writing and reviewing the text, seeking photos and working to very tight deadlines to ensure the exhibition was ready for a visit of the Bishop of Exeter in June. This second phase of the project continues during 2019 with a community art project, producing banners for hanging in the church for which several members are involved in sewing and stitching.

I receive many and varied requests for information in a typical year and a couple of highlights for 2018 include providing some background information on the wreck of the HMS Montagu for archaeological investigations and supplying historic photos of the North Light to Trinity House who are preparing significant works to the lighthouse buildings.

Long-term bird ringing studies on Manx Shearwaters and Wheatears continued. A record 361 shearwater chicks were ringed, as well as 180 full-grown birds. 100 previously-ringed adult shearwaters were recaptured, providing a wealth of valuable information on their life histories.

Wheatears faced very difficult weather conditions as they returned in spring. Even so, at least 56% of the birds breeding in 2017 survived migration to and from their African winter quarters and bred on Lundy in 2018.

In spring and autumn, ringing groups spent eight weeks studying migrating birds. In all, 2,724 birds of 45 species were ringed during the year. Several groups presented demonstrations and talks to other visitors on the process and value of bird ringing.

Following the digitisation of many past ringing records, these have been added to the BTO's new online database. More than 60,000 Lundy records are now available to ringers on their website. A student from Imperial College London has chosen to analyse historic Lundy ringing data as a project for a Master's course.

Roger & Rosy Key and Steve Compton completed 25 years of surveying the Lundy Cabbage. The total number of Lundy Cabbage in flower in early June 2018 was about 4,700, 31% less than in 2017. This is 8% lower than the running average over the last 25 years. However, the estimate of total number of plants, including those not in flower, is at least 50,000, which around 60% more than in 2017 so the plant has not declined. The endemic Lundy Cabbage Weevil was very abundant. We record our thanks to Roger, Rosy and Steve for their remarkable contribution to the study of Lundy's endemic plant and we are pleased that Alan & Sandra Rowland have agreed to continue the survey from 2019.

2018 was a quiet year for marine studies and activities. The Society was pleased to support the purchase of temperature loggers to replace existing ones on the wreck of the MV Robert (for seabed measurements) and on the jetty (for shallow water measurements). Such measurements are important for interpreting change and in making links between wildlife events and water temperature.

The Society has been represented at workshops of the North Devon Marine Pioneer project and the WWF UK SEAS project. The Pioneer project was set up to show how to make the most of the natural capital of the coast and of the marine area out to 20 miles offshore. The area was chosen because of the concentration of new Marine Conservation Zones and of the existence of an established protected area at Lundy. In combination with the Pioneer project, the WWF UK SEAS project is investigating how to achieve well-managed Marine Protected Areas throughout the country using North Devon, including Lundy, as a trial area.

There were no grant applications in 2018 although we were able to provide funding for weather station equipment for the Lundy Conservation team and for head torches to support the Manx Shearwater surveys.

In May we learnt with much sadness of the death of Mary Gade, daughter of Felix and Rene Gade, who grew up on Lundy, having made her first crossing from Bideford at the tender age of just 18 days, and spent much of her adult life living and working on the island. She inherited her father's love of birds and over the years amassed what may very well remain the longest list of species seen on Lundy by any one person. She will be remembered with deep fondness by those in the Lundy birding community that knew her.

Roger Allen passed away in July. He had served as the Honorary Independent Examiner in recent years. Roger was an avid Lundy collector and had published a Lundy poetry book and a catalogue of postcards. He was also an artist, producing many watercolours of Lundy.

In the spring I was able to take a sabbatical from work and spend three months on Lundy, volunteering to work in the Tavern and with the housekeeping team. It was a really rewarding experience and the island team made me very welcome. I had several useful discussions with other committee members who were visiting and I met a good number of members who were very positive about the work that we do. The committee works very hard so it was very encouraging to hear this positive feedback.

With 95 people at the 2018 AGM, we had what is certainly the highest attendance in recent times and possibly the highest ever. In writing this report I realised how much had been achieved during the year and I feel sure the LFS is in a healthy place and has a strong future. Thank you for your support.

MICHAEL A. WILLIAMS
February 2019

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT 2018

2018 was another good year for the Society, with membership numbers increasing and many new members joining who were interested in Conservation Breaks.

Thank you as always to all members for paying their subscription in 2018 and supporting the Society in that way, and a huge thank you to those members who sent a donation along with their subs, these were greatly appreciated by the Society and helps us to fulfil the Society's aims.

Subscription and membership news

Subscriptions become due annually in January, and may I remind you that our preferred method of payment is by standing order, however if you prefer to pay by cheque please make your cheque payable to the LFS and post it to me at the address below, or if you would like to set up a standing order then also please contact me and I will send you the appropriate form.

A reminder that the subscription rate is currently £25 for individual members and £28 for family membership. A student membership is also available to members or potential members beginning a degree course, the reduced rate for students is £15, which we hope will encourage future members.

I sent 48 letters and emails out in the summer of 2018 to members who had not paid their annual subs. Half of those members replied and brought their subs up to date. Those who did not reply had their details removed from the database to comply with the new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). I also had to remove details of a few members who, after being contacted several times, did not pay the correct subs, again in accordance with GDPR.

As I indicated earlier, membership of the Society continues to increase, membership at the end of 2018 stood at 467 (counting only 2 members per family membership). As well as sending publications to all members, the Society also sends to 16 institutions which includes the legal deposit libraries as well as other libraries, the RSPB, BTO and The Landmark Trust.